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ABSTRACT

A group of British researchers visited Bielefeld, West Germany, for 5 days in order to look at the German system of prevocational/vocational education programs for 14-19 year olds. The results of their observations and interviews were the following: (1) despite the differences in their education and training systems, the United Kingdom and West Germany have much to learn from each other; (2) the willingness of German employers to put funding, facilities, and expertise into vocational training was thought to be worth exploring as a model, with modifications; (3) the increased emphasis on integrated curriculum in England could be useful for German students disenchanted with "irrelevant" general education; (4) German teachers appeared less critical of the education system and of the temporary measures to combat youth unemployment than their British counterparts; (5) the Germans had much greater resources for career counseling but separated that function from teaching so counselors did not know their counselees; (6) the Germans seemed to have no equivalents for the prevocational programs developed in recent years in the United Kingdom; (7) many elements of active learning were unfamiliar to the German staff; and (8) the German system was both more rigid in requirements and more flexible in providing education at any age than the British system. (The report contains separate sections by various researchers on these aspects of the German system: parental involvement, professional development, teacher status, business studies, retail distribution teaching methods, creative use of language, special needs, work experience, assessment, career guidance, transition from school to work.) (KC)

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The Further Education Staff College

INFORMATION BANK

Working Paper

2784

TRW

Vocational preparation (18-25)
in West Germany

Author

Rosmary Marsden

Date

January 1980

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Rosmary Harnden 1980

Vocational Preparation (14 - 19) in West Germany

Intensive Study Visit Sponsored by the

Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges

March 9 - 13 1987

Rochdale - Bielefeld (Twin Town)



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B PREPARATION/PRELIMINARY WORK

1 Correspondence/Telephone Calls

- a) From June 1986 correspondence and telephone calls took place between Rochdale Group Leaders and : Rochdale Twin Towns Co-ordinator
Bielefeld's Twin Town Co-ordinator
Bielefeld's Senior School Inspector
Chief Education Officer Bielefeld
in order to assess the feasibility of the visit.
- b) Letters to Rochdale head teachers/principals/pre-vocational co-ordinators circulated in June 1986 notifying them of the proposed visit plan.
- c) An announcement was placed in the LEA School Bulletin June 1986 inviting participants to state reasons for participating.
- d) A number of participants were following the LEA 20 day in-service training course on pre-vocational provision 14-19. Many participants wrote a letter of application for the visit giving reason for their interest. The LEA Advisory service and Officers were involved in the selection of participants.
- e) Background material was gathered from a range of sources eg FEU and preliminary reading material was distributed to participants who were then asked to give a written focus of their investigation whilst on the visit.
- f) Several briefing meetings were held with the participants at Rochdale Teachers' Centre in preparation for the visit in addition to many planning discussions between the two leaders.
- g) A variety of resources on aspects of UK pre-vocational provision were prepared in packs to distribute and explain to the Bielefeld Host Speakers.

eg Careers Service

YTS

CPVE

TVEI

Pre-Vocational programmes 14-16

FEU Publications

Special Needs documents

College/School prospectuses

State Mill: Adult Education/Training/Staff Development/In-Service
Training for Teachers.

C. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

There is no attempt in the main body of the report to give a full description of the German tripartite school system or the Dual System of vocational training, although a knowledge of these underlies the more specific comments in the separate reports. In drafting the report it was felt that such descriptions are available elsewhere and that it would be acceptable for the 'Overview' sections simply to indicate the range of facilities visited and give the general impression they made on the group. A more analytical treatment is then given in the other sections.

Although the group members discussed the general lines of the report and agreed to record particular aspects, there was much group discussion of general issues and hence a degree of overlap in the individual sections. Some of the sections ('Retail Distribution' 'Business Studies') take a close look at how particular areas of the curriculum are offered and at differences of definition of the subject. Other sections address aspects which apply not only to prevocational/vocational training but to young people's experience as a whole, for example 'Parental Involvement'. While it is hoped that the sum of the different sections will give the reader a feeling for the overall pattern, there are obviously aspects which could not be explored in a 5-day visit or for which greater facility in German would be necessary.

There was no conscious attempt to reach a consensus in the conclusions and participants' perceptions do vary on specific points. There is however surprising unanimity in the group's general conclusions and this may be a reflection of the fact that we all come from one LEA (Rochdale) and are involved in the LEA's staff curriculum development programme for prevocational teachers/co-ordinators.

General conclusions

- 1 Despite the differences in their education and training systems, the Federal Republic and the UK have much to learn from each other in preparing young people for adult life and employment, especially in times of high unemployment and rapid change in both countries. The long standing partnership between Rochdale and Bielefeld offers a ready channel for the exchange of ideas and assistance, with a general willingness and sympathy on both sides to help discussion along.
- 2 The willingness of German employers to put funding, facilities and expertise into vocational training in the state system was felt to be admirable and worth exploring as a model for the UK - with appropriate modifications.
- 3 The group recognised the practical value of distinguishing clearly between the employers' task (specific vocational training) and the school/college task (general education). They were concerned however that the task of integration appeared to be borne by the individual student/apprentice. The growing emphasis in the UK on integrated programmes at both prevocational and vocational level could offer something for German students who were disenchanted with 'irrelevant' general education at college.

- 4 German teachers appeared less critical of the existing education and training systems than their British counterparts. Because youth unemployment was viewed as a temporary problem, special programmes and additional funding within the existing framework were seen as an appropriate response until times improved. The British experience suggested that a more radical appraisal might soon become necessary.
- 5 The resources of the Federal Careers Guidance Service were a source of envy and inspiration. The group was less impressed by the strict separation of the functions of the Careers Counsellors (employed by the Federal Manpower Boards) and the teachers in the schools. There is no system of Careers Teachers who know the individual pupil and can ensure continuity of counselling and advice. This was felt to be a major gap.
- 6 There seemed to be no equivalents for the prevocational programmes developed in recent years in the UK. Specific subjects, especially Economics (Arbeitslehre/Wirtschaft) contained much subject matter which was relevant to the world of work. We saw little evidence outside the special classes in the Kollegschule of integration of material across subjects and no extended periods for pupils to sample different vocational areas before coming to a decision about their future career.
- 7 Many of the elements which encourage active learning in CPVE, TVEI, and YIS were unfamiliar to the German staff we met. Profiling, residential periods, cross-curricular activities, teamwork, mini-enterprise and negotiated learning are not commonly found or seen as necessary aspects of curriculum delivery. The inclusion of these elements could enrich the programmes offered to young Germans.
- 8 The tripartite school system and dual system of vocational training are both more rigid and more flexible than the equivalent British systems. The group criticised the labelling of young people according to purely academic achievement as too rigid. They welcomed however the lack of strict age limits and the concept of 'entitlement' to the next stage of education and training at whatever age it was reached by the individual. This flexibility was judged one of the most important lessons the UK could learn from the Federal Republic.

Further conclusions for the LEA

- 1 This study visit is relevant in a number of ways to work of the LEA and institutions in it as indicated in the report sections.
- 2 A strong feature was the collaborative nature of the visit involving many providers in the 14-19 age group. The LEA is proposing tertiary reorganisation in the near future and attempts to bring staff together from schools and colleges is to be welcomed. Also many of the initiatives in 14-19 provision eg TVEI and CPVE rest on collaboration and co-operation between establishments. This study visit offered an opportunity to help facilitate this co-operation and involved teachers/lecturers from a range of establishments.
- 3 Many of the course participants were following on LEA in-service courses on prevocational provision. This is the first occasion in which a comparative study of provision in another country has been part of a staff development course design. It has enabled teachers to have an international perspective in addition to the more usual view of

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curriculum developments (local, regional and national). Such innovation is welcomed and is of benefit to the LEA as well as individuals.

- 4 Twin town links have been strengthened in terms of eg personal contacts for schools, information exchange. Curriculum links may also be developed in respect of the two proposals outlined previously

- model business company simulation
- translation service activity

A group of Bielefeld teachers, supported by the Principal of the Kollegschole are interested in following a similar programme in Rochdale ie study visit of 14-19 provision in 1988.

D REPORT SECTIONS

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In England, there is no legislation for providing parents with rights to influence and participate in their child's education. However, research emphasises the importance of parental involvement in the achievement of children in school. Plowden ('67) recommends that a more direct relationship be established between teachers and parents - they should be partners in more than name. The 1986 Education Act has enabled more parents to be on Governing Bodies of schools. However, I think it is fair to say that in the secondary sector at least, there can be a certain amount of hostility and tension between parents and teachers and uncertainty about the respective parts they have to play. The parent, in England, is not allowed discussion about curriculum content and education methods employed (unless controversial eg assemblies and sex education). The autonomy of the Head Teacher in England decides the level of involvement with parents whereas in West Germany, as far as I could gather, the schools and colleges are more centrally controlled and therefore there appears to be a common policy of parental involvement.

The major difference in the role of parents in education in Bielefeld seems to be that the convention of "in loco parentis" accepted in our schools is not so in West German schools. However, I understand that in the minority Comprehensive schools, there is a pastoral system developing based like ours on the role of the form tutor. It needs to be stated at this point that education is perceived in West Germany as having a high profile, and teachers who are civil servants and have status in the community are respected for their professional expertise.

In West Germany, parents are involved with teachers when, at the end of primary school the pupil, according to teachers' recommendations and marks are allocated to a place in a tri-partite system. It seems it is rare for the parent to question the judgement of the teacher in a situation which indeed could be subjective. In very rare cases, a "borderline" pupil is allowed because of parental pressure, to go to the gymnasium for a week to sit some tests and to see if he/she is up to the required standard.

My own role as Head of Year is not replicated in the German system - the subject teacher is the reference point and indeed, it seems it is quite usual for a parent to ring a teacher up at home to enquire about pupil progress. The teacher is not regarded as a substitute parent/social worker etc. However, in the Hauptschule the staff did regret that there is no equivalent of our Education Welfare Officer to provide a link between school and parents. If a pupil is missing from school in West Germany, the only recourse is for the teacher to ring the parents of the child at home. In the Hauptschule, we saw a parent helping in the classroom and it seems this is fairly common. The class were planning for an exhibition at the time of our visit of which they anticipated about an 80%-90% parental involvement. Indeed, it appears that social and cultural functions in the evenings and weekends are always well attended by parents.

As the pupil gets older, the teachers see less of the parents (as in England!) but it is surprising that in the equivalent to upper 6th form, the pupils studying for "Abitur" very rarely involve their parents in school. The pupil is considered responsible for his own work or lack of it! - a similar situation to our Polytechnics and Universities.

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There is no Governing Body as we know it - the equivalent to the Chief Education Officer holds a great deal of power but there is an interesting body of people called "Schulkonferenz" which is set up comprising one parent representative from each class, one pupil and one teacher. Each class votes for a parent to represent the other parents in that class and they meet together either with or without the teacher as often as once a month.

When a pupil seeks vocational counselling at the Federal Institute of Labour, the Counsellor will first visit the school but then it is normal for the parent to accompany the young person for an interview to the Vocational Guidance Office. It is helpful that the offices are open every evening which encourages this.

The translation of letters given to parents of pupils in a Gymnasium reveals a professional and polite tone. Most letters were similar to those sent out by Secondary schools in England ie a letter and a form to fill in about holiday courses, a letter inviting parents to the Annual Concert, a letter about money raised by the equivalent to our PTA to raise money for the opening of the old Sports Hall. One letter gave parents (as well as pupils and staff) the opportunity to vote on whether the school should close one Saturday morning in four. The vote for parents would probably be at the discretion of individual head teachers in England. The letter which would be alien in State schools in England is the one telling parents what books they have to buy for their children in each year group. However, I discovered that the average parent spends about £10 a term on books for each child which is perhaps, not as exorbitant as one would imagine.

As education appears to be valued by parents in West Germany, students on the whole, are encouraged to continue their studies as long as possible. Young people are often supported by their parents well into their twenties and recently, there has been a "swing" towards such occupations as banking for academic pupils rather than the traditional route through University.

There is now a 10% unemployment problem in Bielefeld but the parents seem more reluctant than their British counterparts to encourage their children to go elsewhere find work and to move out of the community. In contrast in Bethel many of the pupils with special needs lived apart from their parents but it seems the parents were pleased that their son/daughter is able to have this opportunity for training/education at Bethel. Some parents are only able to visit three or four days a year.

On the whole, it is difficult to compare the two as they are dissimilar in many ways. In Bielefeld, there is evidence of more influence. Because of the "Continental Day", the pastoral "problems" and the extra curricular activities surrounding lunch-time in England do not exist. There is much to recommend in the German system with reference to parental involvement, especially the facts that involvement seems to be "unified" and does not rely on the whim of a head teacher, that all schools have 2-3 days a year which are "open" to parents as well as open evenings and the parent representative for each class seems an interesting and innovative idea. Finally, the mutual respect between parent and teacher in evidence in West Germany is more difficult to maintain in the present "political climate" but is obviously most desirable.

I INTRODUCTION

I had a particular interest in the arrangements for professional and curriculum development because of my involvement in arranging such programmes in Rochdale. The LEA has responded to the innovatory and challenging nature of prevocational/vocational courses 14-18 through long and short courses, regular meetings of prevocational co-ordinators, the establishment of joint working groups with schools, colleges, YTS managing agents, employers and Careers staff. The new programmes represent not only (and not necessarily) a change of subject matter but also a radical change in teaching and learning styles with a new emphasis on teamwork, negotiation, cross-curricular integration and enterprise activities. I was interested to see whether similar challenges were being taken up by German colleagues and what strategies they used in the professional development of their teaching force.

2 FRAMEWORK

Arrangements for in-service training and professional development should be seen in the appropriate context. German school teachers receive a much longer academic and professional training initially, taking two subject to a high level. After a lengthy period of induction they become established civil servants with good status in the community and relatively high remuneration. School organisation and routine generally leaves German teachers with fewer school commitments outside class contact, since there are far fewer out of school activities, more modest pastoral systems and teachers are allowed to be off school premises while not teaching. The expectation is therefore that the major responsibility for further professional development is on the individual teacher.

Teachers can request up to five days leave a year for in-service training. Generally arrangements will be made to cover classes for younger children but in the older age groups classes will simply be cancelled. Secondments for longer periods are not in general use, although it is under discussion and has been used in the past for retraining teachers of classics as mathematics teachers.

All teachers undergo an inspection at least once every six years in which the Head or Inspector observes two lessons and gives a full report. This report is discussed with the teacher and thus provides an additional basis for professional development.

Teachers Resources Centres and seminars are available to support those interested but there is no compulsion to attend.

3 ISSUES

Three major concerns were discussed with senior staff during the visit; the management of major curriculum change at state level; new developments at local level especially where these cross traditional boundaries; the updating or retraining of staff. Various strategies for professional development are used to meet these challenges.

4 MANAGEMENT OF MAJOR CURRICULUM CHANGE AT STATE LEVEL

Reliance on professional self development generally produces an uneven response and the outcome in the classroom may be unpredictable. In curriculum areas where the state wishes to promote particular outcomes and ensure broad coverage three methods are used. Firstly a working party comprising mainly teachers but also including academic and business or community representatives is convened with the purpose of publishing guidelines, case studies or new work schemes and projects for trialling. These are circulated down to schools and comments or revisions requested. Although the content of the guidelines is binding the teachers, exhortations on teaching style are not.

Secondly a special 3 day course of training can be organised. With the introduction of teacher counsellors in secondary schools, the teachers selected were given 15 hours remission for training and a one week block. Thirdly a long-term programme might be established. With the introduction of new primary school guidelines over 80% of primary teachers in North Rhine Westphalia attended a four year programme. The course format was a combination of full day sessions with cover for classes and half day afternoons during the teacher's own time.

5 COMMENTARY

It is probable that these measures are effective where the number of curriculum areas involved is small, where the emphasis is on change of content rather than style. While it is accepted that implementation will be slow.

6 NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS

It has been noted that teachers themselves perceived new opportunities and issues for which they had not been trained and which were not included in state priorities. Three major examples were described to us where teachers had taken the initiative. The Kollegschole had established a joint course leading to the Abitur and the professional business examinations. To develop appropriate teaching materials staff had discussions with members of the local business community and worked together in their free afternoons. Some support, for example money for speakers or occasional supply cover, was available. A similar pattern was used to develop closer co-operation with the Arbeitsamt: the target this time was more coherent information and advice for students on careers, work placements and the world of work generally.

Some new developments required the co-operation of staff who were initially reluctant or uninterested, for example where the project required cross curriculum team work. A pressure group of teachers (perhaps mustering support from teachers, parents and pupils) attempted to have a resolution passed by the Schulkonferenz with which all staff would have to comply.

7 COMMENTARY

These strategies exploited some features of the system (free time in the afternoons, the power of the Schulkonferenz to respond to and enforce new developments). But they rely heavily on teacher energy and goodwill. The level of external support was minimal: notable by their absence were material resources, network information, advisory teacher support and monitoring. The emphasis was on further education. Again the framework supported change in content rather than in teaching style.

This issue arose principally in the further education sector where vocational training could only be given by a Meister. In vocational areas where working methods have changed radically there was a dire need for updating through training or secondments to industry. Not only did this not seem to be provided, but the recent establishment of private schools with state subsidies was resulting in stiff competition for students. The under-employment of staff with outdated skills was becoming a problem at the college. In contrast the Sparkasse training programme included further professional training and updating for its own employees in the bank.

9 COMMENT

The dual system ensures high quality initial training in very specific crafts and vocations but the implications of rapid change to the work place, including the range of jobs required, did not seem to have elicited a comprehensive response to updating and retraining.

10 GENERAL

The framework and arrangements for professional development, particularly where associated with curriculum development, are attuned to a society undergoing gradual organic change. The strategies for changes in content are more apparent than the support and advice for changes in method or process. The pace of new development is increasing in Western Europe and it is likely that a much greater range of support services will be needed in West German schools and colleges if they are to respond in an appropriate way.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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TEACHER STATUS

High priority was given to education and it is held in high esteem. The status of teachers was also recognised both in terms of professional expertise and the financial rewards available to teachers. This was indicated recently in an article where the ability of secondary teachers in city schools to earn £24,000 pa by the age of 45 plus a starting salary for primary teachers of £13,500, must encourage good quality candidates. It also makes interesting reading for British teachers in view of their recent pay negotiations. German teachers also receive an extra month's pay at Christmas, a holiday bonus in July, and retire on a pension which is 75% of their salary.

The higher status may relate to the perceptions within society and the teaching profession of the teacher's role:-

- (i) Teachers concentrate their efforts on teaching, their priorities lie within the classroom 'educating' their pupils in order that these pupils gain the necessary and highly valued qualifications.
- (ii) Teachers can become 'stable' and recognised members of local society. They normally stay within the one school throughout their career. They are under no pressure to move in order to gain varied experience, and as a result promotion. This, it could be argued, is a weakness rather than a strength; however from a 'pastoral' standpoint, this stability has distinct advantages. Teachers become familiar with local issues, they are able to establish ongoing links with families, and they become aware of the educational demands made upon pupils within that federal state. Add to this knowledge of vocational training opportunities and contact with the various agencies involved in work placements, and you create a teacher who is a valuable resource.
- (iii) Headteachers appear to be less autonomous. Decisions in regard to school policy are taken in consultation with parents, members of staff, and on occasions pupils. In the Sieker Schule, a local Hauptschule visited by the group, the consultation process took the form of a 'school parliament' made up of six teachers, four parents and two students.

The role of the 'school parliament' as outlined in the school handbook was:-

"....to discuss and to decide upon the main educational problems at the school".

One aim was to examine the pastoral system within the schools both in terms of support given to pupils outside the classroom and the provision of a Personal and Social Education programme within the curriculum.

It was evident however, that neither had become an established feature of the German educational scene. The 'Gymnasium' visited, had a teacher elected by the pupils, who was available to discuss their problems with them. The teacher was allowed one extra 'free' lesson per week to do this. The impression gained was that the problems open for discussion were to do with the 'academic' side of school life.

The Hauptschule had appointed a 'school counsellor' to conduct group counselling sessions within the school. The person entrusted with this task was an existing member of staff who made herself available for consultation outside normal school hours. As a result very few pupils availed themselves of this facility.

The local comprehensive schools did seem to be attempting to organise a pastoral system based upon the Year Head/Form Teacher model found in English schools.

The need for a more organised system in other schools may become evident if and when 'discipline' problems increase. There was some evidence to suggest this may already be happening, as falling rolls encourage schools to accept pupils for whom their curriculum is inappropriate, the pupils reacting accordingly with disruption and disinterest.

A teacher of twenty-five years when asked about teacher morale reacted with the following response:-

"After twenty five years I am slowly becoming disillusioned, young teachers today become disillusioned much more quickly".

The future may require German teachers to re-examine their role. They may not be able to remain solely disseminators of knowledge to well motivated pupils striving for qualifications.

Conversely, English teachers may be better off if the pastoral aspect of their role was placed in the hands of non-teaching staff or outside agencies.

BUSINESS STUDIES AND NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THE CURRICULUM

A variety of establishments were visited and my findings were as follows:-

Due to the basic structure of the Education System in Germany and its restricted range of compulsory subjects, Business Studies subjects in the general sense are not offered under the age of sixteen - the pupils eleventh year of schooling.

Economics was, however, seen as a general school subject, and was taught from Class 7 (when pupils were approximately 13 years of age). From Class 9 it was possible for pupils to choose extra lessons in this subject area.

All of the four types of Secondary School can offer Data Processing, Typewriting and/or Word Processing etc, but only as a voluntary subject where the lessons take place outside the normal school day (after 2.30 pm).

Discussion with Teachers in a Hauptschule revealed that it was the Parent/Teachers Association which purchased the Commodore 64 Computers and Disk Drives, which we saw in use, and these were mainly used for computer programming exercises. An expressed difficulty was that computer software purchased used English Commands, and they were trying to teach GW-Basic, Cobol or a 'new' language COMOL.

The Kollegschule, which represents an integration of the academic Gymnasium Sixth-Form and 'professional' schools, offers pupils the chance of obtaining a double qualification after a three year course-both the Abitur and the Korrespondent qualification awarded by the Local Chamber of Commerce, which has a great control over what aspects of Business Education are taught, based on the needs of the local industries. Pupils take 36+ lessons per week, which includes 3 hours of English Translation Classes, 3 hours Business Correspondence, 3 hours of Economics and 2 hours of Typewriting lessons. We were told that most pupils had difficulty in passing the Typewriting requirement of the course - where pupils had to achieve typing speeds of between 35 and 40 wpm in order to gain a minimum pass.

In the Gymnasium visited pupils in Class 11 were in a Computer Studies Lesson. There were 18 pupils in the group with 15 student Computer Stations each with its own double disk drive for 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch floppy disks - although the computers were also networked to the Teachers Station (and each others). The Teacher's monitor was extra large for demonstration purposes. Each Computer monitor was Colour or Mono adjustable. Every 3 computer stations were linked to a printer. All workstations were purpose-built with adjustable height chairs and each also had its own writing/work desk which could be adjusted as necessary. Pupils were working on developing simple programmes based on given Flowchart handouts - a similar activity to those given in English Computer Studies Lessons - the difference being the standard and amount of equipment available.

One particularly innovative course was that offered at the Carl-Severing-Schulen, Commercial School. Pupils who were on the full-time Business Studies Course, who did not wish or were not able to obtain a Training Place were able to obtain practical Office experience by being 'employed' for a year in a 'fantasy company'. The one we visited belonged to a network of over 400 similar 'companies' in West Germany and beyond. Unlike British mini-enterprises, however, they dealt only with fictitious transactions and no actual finance is at stake. In all other respects the company provided a realistic context for acquiring business skills.

RETAIL DISTRIBUTION VOCATIONAL TRAINING: TEACHING METHODS

The following information and comments are drawn from observations made at the Carl-Severing Schulen (English equivalent - a College of Technology) and as a result of the collation of answers to questions posed to staff and pupils there.

The scope of this report is naturally limited since it concentrates on the one example of Retail Distribution training visited. This course was in deed untypical in that it was specially designed to accommodate young people who had failed to gain a "normal" apprenticeship under the German Dual System. Pre-dominantly, female, and full time (unlike the usual day-release system) the course still covered the same content as the "normal" course and its members worked towards the same qualification.

The only work experience gained on this course was that found by the students themselves, during their vacation periods with no help offered by the school in arranging this. To off-set this lack of work experience, the school had built into the course a project called "Fantasy Products" which was the nearest example to simulation which I observed. The project was very similar to the Unified Vocational Preparation courses designed by the new defunct Distributive Industry Training Board. Students were encouraged to take part in the running of a theoretical company and links with other schools in Germany, Austria and Switzerland made this as realistic as possible. Several departments existed including purchasing, personnel, accounts, sales, advertising, post and mail order. The project was obviously well resourced and equipped with access to no less than six computers complete with printers and seven electronic typewriters (catering for a group size of twenty-two).

However, whilst the group were enjoying the project work and were no doubt learning from their experiences the venture seemed to be a commercial one, rather than a retail one. Indeed it would seem that the German understanding of Retail "off the job" training is very much along the lines of office practice and administration and does not encompass many of the areas covered by our own courses. Vocational training in "schools", no matter which occupation is very much a theoretical rather than a practical experience and encompasses general education too, an area our own Youth Training Scheme omits.

There seems to be a clearly drawn line between the vocational training given "off the job" and that which is considered to be the province of industry and there seems to be no interest in trying to "integrate" as we are being encouraged to do. Perhaps we have something the German System could draw upon here. However returning to Retail training, the "missing curriculum links" in the vocational training at school must be fulfilled "in company", if the high standard of service in the stores in Bielefeld can be used as a measure of Customer Contact Training. The influence of industry is also felt through the Chamber of Trade on the final examination set by that body without consultation with the "schools".

This examination is a multiple-choice answer paper (rather like our own Retail Distribution City and Guilds 9441) but there is no assessment made of practical skills as part of the final assessment (unlike our system).

In the main the teaching methods observed were didactic and there was little evidence to suggest that this was not the norm. Even the "progressive project" Fantasy Products was structured by the teaching staff with little room for manoeuvre by the students. Indeed suggestions, that the "Company" should be given awkward problems to deal with or discuss were dismissed as we were told that all the Companies in the link were flourishing and would not be allowed to "fail".

This particular visit was especially useful as I am having to become involved in a link with the Carl-Severing Schulen especially with our second year YTS trainees where course work involves setting-up a Company, international links would obviously enhance this experience.

Points worth noting:

- 1) The commitment to finding an apprenticeship or alternative along the lines of the young persons first choice, unlike the UK where training places are determined by MSC with advice from Careers. I am sure commitment to a course would be more forthcoming if, the trainee had realistic expectations fulfilled, which is not happening currently.
- 2) A more positive commitment to education and training exists in German Society, it is the norm to be in some form of training into the mid-20's, Training in the UK is still seen with varying jaundiced eyes by all concerned. It would obviously make the job easier if more people were as committed to the idea of training as the Germans obviously are.
- 3) German flexibility on the age of entering or leaving the education and training system, with no stigma attached to being in training in mid 20's. Lesson to be learnt here for youngsters classed as too old at 18 for certain training opportunities.
- 4) Simplified vocational (and educational) qualification system. No abundance of examining bodies doing their own thing. German system much more clear-cut.
- 5) Inclusion of general education with vocational work (especially a foreign language).
- 6) Vocational "off the job" in UK offers practical skills training too (theory into practice to show relevance of theory).
- 7) Encouragement of "free-thinking" as opposed to pure information soaking common to German didactic system.
- 8) Integration of "on" and "off" the job training - the move towards this in the UK can only benefit all sides and improve the quality of training being offered.

CREATIVE USE OF LANGUAGE

My role as an English teacher includes the encouragement of all aspects of writing and creative writing is, in my experience, an activity which transcends barriers of academic prowess. Indeed the least academic pupils often thrive in an environment outside the restrictions of grammar and spelling.

The intake of CPVE students each year has included a small number of students who scraped an 'O' level pass at 16+ English but expressed an interest in being involved in an English activity to be enjoyed rather than examined. This fact and a personal interest in arranging a wider audience for pupils' work, resulted in the resurrection of 'Community News'. This newspaper is published termly and pupils are involved in all aspects of work relating to the publication of a newspaper.

Armed with these experiences, my brief in Germany was to investigate and compare the use of creative language in German schools.

Day one and two with visits to Bethel's Kollegschole, Berufsbildungswerk and Patmoschule behind us, I was beginning to worry as creative writing appeared to be non-existent. All my questions evoked blank expressions and negative answers. Indeed in the Kollegschole the didactic approach of the teachers seemed to preclude any free expression of any kind.

However, undaunted, I prepared to look and ask again during day three's visit to Hauptschule Siekerschule. There we found a project week in operation and creativity, though not necessarily in writing, abounded. The pupils were expressing themselves freely in many different situations ranging from bicycle repairs to preparation of lunch. Although the activities were structured by the staff, the pupils had a choice of activity within the framework provided. I was interested here to note the age range of pupils working happily together in the same room. Interesting also to note was the lack of facilities which was more than amply compensated for by a dedicated staff.

The Carl-Severing Schulen visit showed us a wide range of creative activities ranging from photography to art and design. Here I was interested to find a return to calligraphy and one particular member of staff showed me many examples of pupils' work. As I am aware of a similar re-awakening of interest in calligraphy, myself included, I found this little pocket of shared interests particularly satisfying.

On reflection, perhaps my narrow focus at the beginning of the visit blinded me to the natural creativity which was all around us throughout the visit. The architecture in itself offered lessons to be learnt; the use of space, colour, plants and natural environments presented a whole picture of a relaxed ambience in most of the establishments which we visited. The dedication of the teacher in the small class of severely retarded pupils in the Patmoschule filled me with admiration. Here was true creativity as she devised a variety of aesthetic and sensory experiences to stimulate the slightest reaction in her pupils. And not least the creativity of a student's free writing given to me by the son of a teacher whose home we visited.

To conclude I observed many examples of creative activity in German classrooms but the notion of creative writing common in British schools seemed to be neither recognised nor practised by the German teachers we met.

SPECIAL NEEDS

What we saw in terms of provision for students with special needs in the Bielefeld area was perhaps not typical of what might have been found in the rest of West Germany.

Within the city was a suburb known as Bethel. Closer examination reveals that this area was once a village on the outskirts of the old town of Bielefeld that has been swallowed up as the conurbation of the modern city grew due to the expansion of its industries during the last century. The village of Bethel originated out of a medieval tradition based in the notion of the local Duke or Baron of an area offering protection to handicapped serfs in return for their labour. So established, the village has continued to develop in modern times into a national centre which now caters for a variety of handicapped people. This has been fueled and structured, since the beginning of this century, by an organisation founded by Fritz Von Bodelschwingh, in collaboration with the Lutheran Church, now known as the 'Von Bodelschwingh Institutions'. It is a collection of these Institutions which today makes up the community of Bethel, a town within a town, which caters for a wide variety of handicaps ranging from the mentally and physically disadvantaged to the mentally ill, alcoholics and vagrants. A measure of the size of this community and the impact it makes on the special needs scene in the Bielefeld area, might be indicated by the number of staff employed - 7,500 - and the realisation that handicapped people are placed within the Institutions from all over West Germany.

Within the Bethel community various areas of specialism have been established and one of these has been concerned with epilepsy. The Berufsbildungswerk was a new centre funded via the Federal Government, the Local Council and the Von Bodelschwingh Institutions, who run it, to provide specialist training for 18 to 25 year old students with milder forms of epilepsy. The philosophy of the courses offered; (craft training for boys, textiles for girls) is to equip students with the same skills and qualifications that 'normal' students might acquire but over a longer period of tuition. Students must obtain the usual school leaving qualifications to be eligible for a place (of which there were 120, 70% for boys) and also satisfy a three day selection interview of the Institution before their training can commence. The managers of the centre claimed that 100% of their students would gain employment at the completion of their training. Perhaps this reflects a confidence born out of the excellent facilities available to the instructors. The level of resourcing was impressive. Trainees were given the opportunity to use and develop their skills on the latest computer controlled equipment, which was routinely updated, with a student to 'teacher' ratio of 6 to 1.

The Patmoschule, a centre for 95 of the more severely handicapped students had a similar high level of resourcing. The centre was equipped with a hydrotherapy pool and messy-play area together with each classroom having adequate cooking and toileting facilities. The staff here coped, in a caring way, with a wide range of handicap, both physical and behavioural, within groups of students whose average number was around ten but whose ages could span from 8 to 25 years within each group. Although the level of care and concern the staff gave appeared to be very good there did not seem to be any clear system of recording each student's individual progress. There was no clearly defined developmental curriculum or evidence of educational programmes designed to enable the students to progress. There was no use of the recent developments in micro-computer education and the benefits such developments can have for such students was not recognised by the staff. There seemed to be little integration of these students, even within the community of Bethel itself, most of them being residents at the centre in a dormitory wing within the complex.

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The general picture concerning pupils with special needs seemed to indicate rhetoric moving towards integration policy but with, as yet, little evidence of this happening in reality. The 'Hauptschule' - Secondary Modern School - that we visited would appear to cater for the lower pupil ability percentiles and thus cater for many of the 'kinds' of pupils found within the lower ability bands in our comprehensive schools and ESN (M) Special Schools. It was significant that pupils within the Hauptschule who were having difficulties in their learning did not receive any specialist teacher support within the normal school day but could take advantage of voluntary sessions that were organised by staff as extra-curricular activities.

Those pupils who were referred to the special schools - the 'Sonderschule' - appeared to receive a high degree of care based upon what Ford et al (1982) term the 'medical model' of educational treatment, ie where the 'handicap' tends to obscure what the real educational needs of an individual may be. In terms of the labour market and vocational training, students with special needs also seemed to fit into Soder's (1984) concept of 'surplus population' in that those with some ability were given training that would equip them with qualifications and skills to enable them to compete for jobs with 'normal' people. We saw evidence of this at the Berufsbildungswerk and in a special unit for the young unemployed, the 'Berufsfindung und Ausbildung' which catered for those who had failed to gain jobs due to social as well as intellectual handicaps. By training such surplus labour to become self-sufficient within the labour market they might cease to be a 'surplus' and hence become productive and not become a drain upon resources of society.

However, if an individual's ability was such that it would be unlikely that he or she might ever be able to gain employment then the 'ideology of care' which Soder (op cit) refers to comes into being. The pupils within the Patmoschule had become 'institutionalised' and the implication of the scope and size of the Bethel community would suggest that such institutionalisation had occurred elsewhere. Although to question the motives of well meaning and caring people can cause some discomfort it must be appreciated that the handicapped are a relatively weak group within society who are often not in a position to plead their own cause or are rarely listened to when they do. Since Warnock, moves for the integration of the handicapped into our society through education have rightly gained momentum. We are not at a stage within this movement to celebrate the achievement of the aims set out by Warnock but we are getting there, albeit slowly. In West Germany, from the evidence we saw, it would seem that they have yet to start.

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PROFILING AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Profiling and Assessment

The German assessment is very formalised, with all the educational facilities using the standard system of a scale from 1 to 6 called "NOTEN". During the five day visit, only two establishments used any form of self assessment, and at no time were reports compiled by employers on students on work experience.

The two establishments which used a basic form of profiling were the Training School based at the Bielefeld "Sparkasse" and a Training School run by the Social Services, the "Berufsfindung und Ausbildung für Jugendliche".

At the "Sparkasse" central bank the training school replaced the normal day release college. The trainee bank employers were assessed on scale of 1 to 9, but every 6 weeks they produced a self assessment document on their own progress over that period. During an interview with one of the training staff they would negotiate a final profile for that period. The document contained no core or scale statements, it was merely a joint statement of progress. In many ways it was a formative profile but it was part that "apprentices" assessment.

At the "Berufsfindung" the majority of the students had rejected the traditional system of education, or were ex-drug addicts or young offenders. The school run by the Social Services was set up to try and give these young people another chance of acquiring qualifications, skills and a job. To have any official standing the school had to use the official assessment system, however to try and involve the students more in their education and to aid their development they encouraged self-assessment of their progress and of individual pieces of work. This was then discussed with a counsellor. The profile though had no official weight and was merely used as a teaching strategy to encourage the student.

The lack of interest in profiling reflects the role of assessment in the education and training system. Like the curriculum, assessment is very formalised. The whole country uses the same grading formula, therefore any employer or training establishment can assess the ability of the students they are receiving. Although this may seem too restrictive in that a student's full development can not be assessed in formalised tests, it falls in line with the organisation of the education and training programmes. Each establishment has its own set of tasks and aims, they do not try to encroach in another's area. As the student progresses through the system choosing their vocational area, they receive more specialised training, eventually emerging from the system at the age of 23 to 25. Even then retraining or further training is open to them.

Development is therefore monitored through a series of establishments with progress onto the next stage dependent on the acquirement of required skills. The profile of all round ability and personal development is therefore deemed unnecessary.

Work Experience

Work experience in Bielefeld can be divided basically into two groups.

- 1 Schools based work experience.
- 2 Vocational work experience at a post 16 training school.

The German system of work experience starts at the age of 14/15. In this year vocational counselling officers from the "Arbeitsamt" visit schools once a month. They interview pupils with parents to try and establish an area of vocational interest for the pupil. The next stage is a 3 week work experience

in industry or business. This may be repeated at the age of 16. The "Arbeitsamt" places 7,500 pupils a year in Bielefeld of which 50% obtain apprenticeships with a firm. The "Arbeitsamt" is aided in its task by a committee called the "Pädagogischer Beirat" established in 1970. The committee is composed of educationalists, employers and trade unionists. The committee is responsible for finding placements and timetabling work experience throughout the year ensuring that there is over subscription of certain placements and that employers are not overburdened. Those pupils who do not find an apprenticeship then move to a post 16 training school or on to do the "Abitur".

In the post 16 area there are two distinct types of student. Those with an apprenticeship do not require work placements as they work on day release as here. Those students on full time courses are placed in industry and business according to their vocational area.

In the "Bethel" Kollegschule, students are placed on three work experiences in years 11, 12, 13. The first is a form of community work but the ones in years 12 and 13 are specialised placements in a chosen vocational area.

At no point on any work experience are the students formally assessed by the employer, school or themselves. Only an informal interviewing or group discussion will be held after the placement.

The lack of any negotiated profiling system in Germany surprised me, however once having viewed the system it is easily explained. The whole system from school to work is compartmentalised. Each institution has its own set of tasks, and the progression of a student to the next stage is dependent on his/her obtaining the required skills in that area. By the time pupils have reached the stage of finding an apprenticeship or job they have the required skills to do that. The system is aided by the fact that there is virtually no age limit for students entering an apprenticeship, unlike Britain's age-related system. There is no need for an overall profile as by the time an employer sees a student he/she has decided on that career.

The arrangement of work placements was most impressive. Not only does it save valuable school time, it also ensures the pupil gets the placement he/she wants and the employer is allowed to participate in the education system more constructively. A similar centralised system would be welcomed by many in the Rochdale LEA.

The planning of post 16 education began on a Federal basis in 1965 as changes in employment patterns were foreseen. The post 16 system is organised on a flexible basis which allows people to enter the labour market when they are ready. Employers are partners in education and training, not seen as a separate entity.

ASSESSMENT

In theory the forms of assessment used in those aspects of the German Education system that we saw sounded very good. Continuous written and oral assessment, and examinations, parental involvement in the assessment process - these were all concepts frequently mentioned. This should we hoped, augur well for a flexible and open system. In practice we were to find the system was a little more rigid in many aspects than we had anticipated.

One of the most important times for assessment is in the final year of primary school, when a child's place in the tripartite Secondary Level I is determined. The primary school writes a report based on the continuous assessment of reading, writing, maths and, most importantly, it is held, attitude to work. Consultation and counselling between staff and parents takes place, the parents then having the final choice of school. Parents normally take the advice on offer, but if they wanted their child to go to a Gymnasium, for example, against the advice of teachers, then the child is given a trial period at a Gymnasium, lasting between two weeks and six months. In this situation academic standards determine whether a child stays at the school. Little or no account is taken of attitude to work.

The basis of the assessment/grading system in secondary Level I is the Notenskala, used in most subjects for all the different types of continuous assessment. In our visit to a Hauptschule we heard two criticisms of this system. Firstly the scale of 1 to 6 can be very different, even in classes in the same school. The levels are determined by individual teachers and it is possible for pupils to work out whose class it is easier to obtain a 'good' mark in. Most teachers seem to be unhappy with the subjectivity of this system. Secondly the scale 1 to 6 is left deliberately vague in order to encourage flexibility between educational institutions. However it frequently seems to have the opposite effect, the vagueness leading to caution on behalf of the teachers and a reliance on the academic and factual for assessment purposes. An example will show this.

In the Hauptschule we visited, the norm in North Rhine Westphalia, the children are split at the end of Year 9 into A and B. In order to go into the top level (B) a student must get at least a 3 (Notenskala) in German, English and Maths. Those who fail to do so go into the A stream and will leave with a lower level qualification. This will undoubtedly decrease their chances of getting a good apprenticeship, a fact which is decided on the basis of written tasks in mainly academic subjects

Secondary Level II education in Germany is based for most students, on vocational training through the Dual System. The assessment of the vocational training seems to be fairly uniform. The example we saw was that of a bank. The apprentice spends six weeks in each section of the bank. For each section there is a type of skills checklist (See example attached) which is discussed beforehand by the apprentice and the head of section. The head of section ticks off the various skills during the six weeks then, at the end, the checklist is again discussed. There is space for a contribution by the apprentice, who also has to sign the document. This is a very flexible, negotiated and open form of assessment similar to what we are trying to do in much of our profiling.

However the final assessment, after two to four years of vocational training, is an exam administered by the local Chamber of Commerce/Craft. The teachers have no influence on this exam, which is seen as a major problem. Also they are basically theoretical exams consisting of multiple choice, essays and oral work but no practical aspect or continuous assessment. If the apprentice were to do well in the continuous vocational training but for some reason not in the final exam, they would be most likely to fail. This shows a degree of rigidity in the system which we did not expect.

If one starts from the most obvious positive factor, at least the assessment system in German education, professes to use continuous and oral assessment. And the system does have some very positive aspects from which we can learn much. For example the negotiated assessment of vocational training mentioned above. Or the fact that much of the theoretical and continuing general education done by students with special problems in a Special Projects Unit we visited was marked by themselves. Or the fact that any exam taken as a part of the Abitur has an oral section. However, assessment in the German system, of whatever types, is all too often based only on the academic and the factual. There seems to be very little social or personal aspect to the assessment procedure. The same is usually true of the whole ethos of the school.

This is in contrast to Britain. The curriculum and the pastoral ethos of most British Schools is based on the individuality of the student. A natural extension of this idea would be a move away from assessment by exams to a more holistic form based on continuous written and oral assessment of a students knowledge, skills and personal development. Britain has not, as yet, moved very far down this path. (The notable exceptions being developments in pre-vocational education.) Germany at least seems to have pushed out pointers in some directions, for example parental involvement, and a grading system for all work, even if they have not wholly succeeded.

It seems to me that in terms of assessment and its effect on the whole ethos of a school, Germany and Britain have something to learn from each other. Perhaps we are moving towards the same idea but from different starting points and directions.

CAREERS GUIDANCE/COUNSELLING

It is important to place any particular area of study in the context of the overall structure of the education system in that country. In West Germany there is no formal system of careers guidance/counselling built into the school curriculum. Yet it is very clear that both the quality and quantity of such advice given informally results directly from the decision to direct a child to a particular school at the age of eleven.

I found that the continuation of the tripartite system, now largely abandoned in the UK, has retarded developments in these fields which in the UK and USA, are largely taken for granted. In the Gymnasium problems of attendance and motivation appear rare and careers advice within school hardly needed for middle-class pupils with knowledgeable and supportive parents. However, at least in the school we visited there is a system of election whereby one member of staff is elected and gives advice to pupils in an extra free lesson given over to this task.

However, in the Hauptschule a formal structure appeared necessary if the largely working-class intake were to be helped to make the progress of which they were capable. Teachers in the Hauptschule candidly admitted that this was so!

In many ways the German system is comparable to the UK in the early to mid 1960s. Teachers regard themselves as experts in a particular subject and, especially in the Gymnasium, expect to teach it in a traditional manner to a quiet and attentive audience. Social problems and advice outside subject areas are the preserve of other professionals and can safely be left to them. The fact that this absence of an integrated approach can lead to poor attendance and academic failure in the Hauptschule could be largely ignored since the parents of these pupils have less power and influence in society.

The careers service outside school was found to be very well organised and superbly equipped. Its contact with schools involved exhibitions, arranging interview etc and claimed contact with 96% of pupils. The Hauptschule experienced problems in getting the careers service to come into the school. The system does appear geared to the academically able and motivated pupil.

The flexibility of the system with people moving in and out of education at all ages is welcomed. The absence of a powerful private sector providing candidates for elite positions in society must be supported by all of us who believe in state education. The high standard of resources and buildings showed that they recognise that poor surroundings help to lead to poor motivation and behaviour.

One educationalist said, "I don't remember anyone going from Hauptschule to a Gymnasium". It would seem that the excellent system of training for all avoids the "second-rate YTS" attitude so common in the UK but the abilities of some pupils are only partially developed by a tripartite system at school level.

THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Introduction

Comparisons between the German Education system and our own are already well documented; indeed a group of teachers from Clwyd produced a report in 1984 on "Transition from school to working life" based on a visit to West Berlin in May of that year. Their findings indicated that: "The West German quadripartite system of secondary education together with established prevocational education has little or nothing to offer the UK....". The organisation of education in West Germany varies from Land to Land, and I feel that my findings indicated that although the German system differs from ours, there are many useful lessons to be learned from the provision for pupils in Bielefeld and its surrounding area.

Observations and Findings

There are a number of key words in the language of German education, these are: flexibility, consultation and experience. The transition from school life to work can be spread over a number of years, and progress by a variety of routes, but one of its most important aspects is the provision for those of lower academic ability or lower motivation to proceed with their chosen career by means of entry suited to their own capabilities. An interesting example of this is the case of those people training for social work, where training can start pre or post Abitur, or indeed in the absence of this higher qualification. The course involves a number of work experiences, set up and supervised by the educational establishment with extensive debriefing after each. The initial emphasis is simply to provide an insight into the world of work from their chosen career point of view, the second to facilitate the development and understanding of interpersonal relationships both with colleagues and clients, the third in a more specific and active role as a social worker in an institution.

Assistance is given by the school in obtaining a place for further training.

The main link in the preparation of pupils for the progression from school to work is the "Department of Vocational Guidance and Counselling" or "Arbeitsamt". These managers of this scheme identify four main tasks:

- 1 Vocational Orientation for pupils.
- 2 Acting as PARTNERS for school pupils in the transition phase from school to work.
- 3 Finding apprenticeship places for pupils under the "dual-system".
- 4 Promotion of vocational training.

The counsellors go into schools initially to talk to pupils who are still at least two years away from the minimum age for leaving school. At this stage, which they view as being one of the most important, they also talk to parents, and organise lectures whereby members of local companies and firms can visit and advise. They place heavy emphasis on the partnership aspect, and discussion to reach the correct vocational decision for each individual.

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The second phase of involvement with schools is the "days of presence" in schools where a counsellor has a regular day and time every month or so, when he visits a specific group of pupils. The teachers in the schools assist in contacts with the Arbeitsamt, but it must be said that these are not officially designated careers teachers, but ordinary classroom teachers who carry out much of this with their normal contractual duties. This second phase involved pupils of all abilities (although on visiting a "Hauptschule" the opinion was expressed that it was sometimes difficult to get the careers counsellors to come into school), and there are special vocational counsellors for each type of school. The counselling process also carries on outside school, where pupils can make 1 hour appointments to see their counsellor and if a satisfactory conclusion is not reached at the end of the first appointment, or if the pupil has a change of mind, a second or third appointment can be made. The overall aim is that the counsellor simply acts as a partner in this process, and that the pupil finds their own desired employment situation through them (NB over 14000 pupils are involved in this process). Occasionally, group counselling is used - usually with pupils involved in the same area of occupational interest; a longer period of time is allowed for this, usually about 3 hours. Vocational information is also given out by phone.

One of the Arbeitsamt's other functions is in the placing of apprentices in the "dual system", where students are given on the job training whilst continuing with some academic studies. The Bielefeld Arbeitsamt deal direct with companies, and are responsible for the placement of about 7500 trainees every year. About 50% of pupils leaving between the ages of 17 and 19 progress to the dual system. However, although the dual system is well documented, several points are worthy of mention:

- 1 The length of the apprenticeship is 3 years.
- 2 A pupil can enter the dual system up to the age of about 25 (after which other provision for training is made), although the average age of entry is 18-19.
- 3 The trainees are paid by their employers during training; the amount varies depending on age and chosen area of training.
- 4 If no apprenticeship is available, then the pupil can continue with his/her education either in the same school or in a different one, to improve their education until such time as a training place can be found for them.

The promotion of vocational training is regarded as being of high importance by the district council, who have earmarked 20 million DM for this purpose. This funding allows even for those who can only find a training place in another town/city to take advantage of it, whilst being paid any extra living costs incurred by the move. It also allows the Arbeitsamt to assist in the placement of handicapped pupils with companies.

Other areas of responsibility of the Arbeitsamt are:

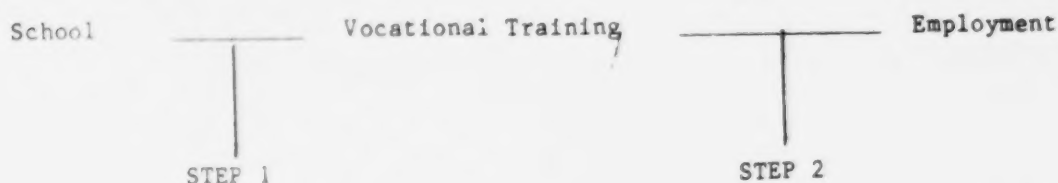
- i) Mediation on behalf of those requiring rehabilitative training eg young offenders
- ii) Funding of the Bethel community.
- iii) Facilitating "vocational sampling".

Allowing progression to institutions such as the Handelschule, Höhere Handelschule and the Berufsgrundschuljahr; all of which deal with pre vocational education, and the latter of which deals with 16-17 year olds leaving the "normal" school system and taking the first steps to employment whilst remaining within the system.

Strong links with the Pädagogischer Beirat.

Key points drawn to attention by the managers of the Arbeitsamt are that:

- 1 German pupils tend to leave school much later than in England (a much higher percentage leave at 17/18.
- 2 Pupils start to decide much earlier as to career direction (at least 2 years before leaving).
- 3 The careers ~~and they~~ go regularly into schools at specific times.
- 4 A computerised careers advisory service similar to our own JIGCAL is used, producing an 18 page document, with a return time of less than 3 weeks.
- 5 Teachers work in partnership with the counsellors, who in turn work in partnership with local industry.
- 6 The transition can be viewed as involving two steps:



Officially, the first step only is where the Arbeitsamt are directly involved, although with the changing unemployment climate in the north of Germany, it is felt that they should become more heavily involved at Step 2 in coming years.

One of the most important developments in recent years in West German education has been the formation of a Committee known as the "Pädagogischer Beirat". This is a group made up of industrialists, teachers, members of the local government, people from the chamber of commerce, and many others concerned with the education system and further training. It was first started in 1970 to act as an advisory and organising body for pupils' work experience, and education of work expectations. Although the Pädagogischer Beirat has no power as such, it has great influence with both prospective employers and employment students. In more recent years, it has been instrumental in the introduction of work experience placements to the Gymnasiums, something previously unheard of. Like the Arbeitsamt the group is apolitical and has been particularly successful in areas such as Duren where every 6th form student is allowed one week experience shadowing an adult working in their chosen area of career interest.

Conclusions

Unlike the Welsh group visit to Berlin in 1984, I feel that there are a number of things we can learn from the Rochdale group's experiences in Bielefeld.

- 1 That industrialists and educationalists view themselves as being partners rather than adversaries. Indeed many companies and local firms plough vast sums of money into the local education system.

eg The Sparkasse (the local bank) puts 3.5 million DM from its profits into the local authority coffers for use in training. From this arrangement, we are told that the industrialists feel that they have a stake in local education and therefore view it with some importance. Perhaps we could learn from this - if only on a local basis - surely if local industry feels itself to be an important part of the local education system, useful dialogue might be set up, and much of the mistrust born through lack of mutual understanding might evaporate.

- 2 Both teachers and those in local business might benefit from the setting up of a group similar to the Padagogascherbeirat. It would enable teachers to understand more fully the requirements of local industry in terms of pupils' work experience, and it would allow the industrialists a Forum where they could communicate these needs, and find out what teachers really have to offer.

Naturally, neither of these points will be implemented overnight, but a first step might be a series of secondments for teachers to initiate and further existing industry-school links.

- 3 An expansion of the existing careers service to allow more regular, and much earlier contact with pupils in schools is, I feel, of importance. We have a long way to go before we reach the heights of the Arbeitsamt Bielefeld with its self service video library showing job training opportunities, but since unemployment still shows little sign of improvement, more adequate funding might at least improve the facilities which young people have for looking for employment.

- 4 Perhaps we can learn a lesson from the high esteem in which the dual system is held - the fact that students (even from poorer backgrounds) are prepared to continue their academic studies whilst undergoing training - possibly in some way due to the fact that they are being paid for it!

- 5 Probably the greatest lesson we can learn from the West German system is in its flexibility. The German system can be seen as analogous to a series of buckets with controlled flow between many of them. Educationally, there is always some spillage from many of the buckets, but there is always another bucket strategically placed to catch the drips. This is exemplified by the special projects unit, the Verein für Berufsfindung which caters for young offenders and ex drug addicts; also in the lack of restriction in the age where pupils can leave education or enter further training. It is a sad reflection of our own country that people leaving school at age 18 having failed their examinations are too old for YTS or "normal" apprenticeships, yet too young for many of the other government training schemes for the unemployed. There may be no local answer to this - what is really required is a more flexible age of entry to YTS, and more readily available financial assistance for older pupils who stay on in school to achieve further qualifications.

The key word in West German education, sadly lacking in the vocabulary of our own system is FLEXIBILITY.

OVERVIEW : The training system

A well planned and structured system which is backed by the will of the Government, Industry and the People to provide opportunities for progression to Further Education and Training and to make it WORK coupled with a desire of the young to be educated and trained to enter the system later in life 50% leave school at between 17 and 19 years. The entry system in the UK is in many crafts, where the rule is 16 years or not at all. Respect is accorded to craft and professional training.

Funding

The funding structure is well defined and established and does not rely on GRIST "temporary or short term" money for funding new initiatives. Shared costs between the State (teachers salaries) and the Region and/or Local Authority (promotion and running costs) mean better facilities plus the co-operation of industry which loans equipment for specialist courses.

Role of Industry

The role of Industry is clear in terms of training, particularly within the Dual System, both in the provision of training places and funding. The Chambers of Craft and Commerce take the key role in the setting of examinations and standards. Although education and training are closely linked throughout Post-16 provision there is no overlapping of the roles - teachers teach and industry trains.

Pre-Vocational Training

There was very little evidence of any structured Pre-Vocational provision eg routes with little option of lateral sampling. The schools sector seems to be just starting a ground swell movement by enlightened teachers (who are doing a period of work experience at the moment) despite a well established system of "Practicals" or work experience (eg Project Trident).

Guidance and Counselling

A well resourced Vocational Counselling service run through the Arbeitsamt or Labour Office, informs and places students in the "apprenticeship" of their choice, even funding moves to other regions to match the student to the job and vice versa. The Office was very well equipped with information on video and tape as well as written copy and students could drop in and gain some idea of what a particular vocation might involve. Nationally agreed official apprenticeships (430 different vocations, 180 on offer in Bielefeld) give clearly defined aspiration routes for students. Trainees not entering the labour market until 18 years after one or two years training and/or education means a more mature and vocationally committed worker. Most students are guaranteed progression of some kind.

Progression Routes

Post-16 education and training takes place in a variety of institutions all of which follow fairly rigid syllabuses whilst at the same time affording the opportunity to gain the maximum achievement, progressing to the Arbitur. The flexibility is further enhanced by the lack of prohibitive age restrictions for access.

The expansion of the Dual System, whilst not always providing training according to a young persons wishes, has kept unemployment low amongst the young.

Other new systems have been established to provide training for those young people who are unable to find either a training place or work. The simulated practice company at the Sarl-Severing-Schule gave practical experience and linked to similar "companies" in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, with an examination set by the Chamber of Commerce.

For those young people who have not found work or a training place the Verien fur Berufsfindung und Ausbildung fur Jegenliche was established in 1984. Here, in addition to sitting examination set by the Chamber of Craft and Commerce, the students can also complete the leaving certificate for the Hauptschule thus opening the way for further progression to education and training. Students are paid monthly allowances, but not at a standard rate eg Special Programme trainees (3 year scheme started in 1984) 500 DM per month, Dental Technicians 450 DM, Bricklayers 950 DM per month.

Assessment

A rationalised assessment and examination system with the Chambers of Craft and Commerce setting external Examinations and Industry or the College setting Practical Assessments (instead of the plethora of National and Regional Examination Boards competing against each other causing confusion, dilution and devaluation of qualifications in the UK) which have recognition and acceptance from Industry, Education and Students alike.

Staff Development

The system of Teacher Training demands that Vocational Tutors also teach another subject eg Engineering and Maths, Brickwork and English, giving breadth to the curriculum. There were complaints that College based Vocational Tutors are not keeping pace with industrial developments.

Conclusion

There are comparisons with the UK system of Education and Training, but in the UK the lack of Industrial involvement, the division of the Job Centres and Careers Offices as separate entities, the morass of qualifications and the continual introduction and amendment of schemes means fractured, decentralised, unco-ordinated system which inspires little confidence, recognition, progression or guarantee of the upholding of skill standards.

The Post-School provision generally seems to provide opportunities throughout for progression to Further Education and/or Training. The structure, together with a more flexible age of entry seems to encourage a more positive attitude towards the provision of education and training in spite of similar problems of unemployment. The involvement of Industry reinforces this positive attitude.

These practices I felt could be of benefit to our own system. By comparison the Counselling and Guidance system appeared to be developing more along the lines of our existing systems.

OVERVIEW : Transition from School

The structure is based on the broad division "academic" work and "training"

The academic aspect is provided by the school system and training is in the hands of industry. Industry in Germany has long been responsible for training and has a clear view of what it requires in terms of manpower and the skills it asks its personnel to have. The financial organisation is that the teaching staff are paid by the regional government (Land), the schools are equipped by the town local government (Stadt), and the vocational guidance centres are financed by the central government (Bund).

THE SCHOOL STRUCTURE

the Gesamtschule comprehensive school. (There are two in Bielefeld)

and the tripartite system which has three kinds of school:

the Gymnasium	grammar school
the Realschule	upper secondary modern school
the Hauptschule	secondary modern school

The school system in the main, in Bielefeld, is the second system and there is a three tiered parental preference with the Gymnasium having the highest status followed by the Realschule with the Hauptschule having the least status.

The status is shown by the method of movement from the primary sector when primary school staff make recommendations as to which school is most suitable for a student. Where a parent disagrees the student can have a weeks trial at the school the parent wants. At the end of the trial period it is decided which school is most appropriate. Parents tend always to go up the status structure mentioned.

During full employment students leave school to enter the next training stage. The students can leave at 16 to go into training or at 18 to go to university (90% in full employment times) or into training for industry.

RESPONSES TO CURRENT DIFFICULTIES

There are now two main problems: (a) unemployment
(b) falling rolls

Unemployment has meant that students leaving at 18 (60%) are now going straight into vocational training. This means that the less able students are not able to take up the places that were formerly available to them.

Another point which seem familiar was the realisation that in Germany there is North/South divide within Germany providing the new technology jobs and people in Bielefeld (North) undergoing retraining and moving to the more prosperous South. In Bielefeld the traditional manufacturing base - textiles and engineering - has been eroded and fewer jobs are available.

In the case of falling rolls the system seems to be maintaining the places in the Gymnasium and the Realschule with the Hauptschule taking the strain of falling rolls. The result for a typical Hauptschule is that fewer students entitle the school to fewer staff who can then offer fewer options. This downward cycle leads inevitably to still fewer enrolments and to school closure. The Hauptschule we visited was expecting only 36 students in the 11+ entry year.

In Germany the developments of new courses are added onto the present position. Staff retraining is limited in that the staff are allowed only five days each year for training or attendance on courses and is on a voluntary basis.

Finance for new courses is available from industry and the education system. Unemployment and the changing structure of employment raises the need to look at vocational or prevocational training but this is limited in the German system - in the Hauptschule it is done in the two years prior to Sekundarabschluss (3 weeks year 9 and 2 weeks in year 10) or in the Gymnasium prior to the abitur (A level). This work experience is not integrated into school studies except in economics lessons and some interview practice is given. The experience is not assessed or reported for future use. PADAGOGISCHE BEIREIT is the organisation for setting up the work experience for the students.

Employment bureaux are state financed and are separate from the schools and the students and parents are encouraged to go along to the bureau. This can be intimidating and provide an excuse for those whose inclination is not to attend.

The perception is of a progression from school to vocational training and into jobs.

However there was a feeling that each area was separated in Germany and this could perhaps produce barriers in the minds of students.

GYMNASIUM

Abitur
|
university more now look
 for employment

REALSCHULE/HAUPTSCHULE

|
training and then into
job/apprenticeship

E FURTHER ACTION

- Possible translation service activity between Rochdale/Bielefeld School.
- Possible participation of Rochdale in Bielefeld's Berufsschule Business Enterprise scheme (model companies).
- Possible Kollegschule teachers visit to Rochdale to look at our 14-19 provision.
- Realia to help with German language and European Studies teaching.
- Presentation to teachers participating in LEA Inset on Pre-Vocational Education and Deputy Heads in March 1987.
- Internal presentation in individual schools, establishments.
- Possible display on presentation for the LEA at the Teachers' Centre.
- Report circulated to headteachers, principals, LEA officers, LEA advisers, IVET, CPVE and YIS co-ordinators.
- Resource for others in the schools, colleges and LEA interested in eg comparative study, European links, exchange visits, curriculum links, German materials.
- Report to Rochdale Twin Town Committee and Chair of Education Committee

Report Distribution List

Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges
Visit Participants.
headteachers/Principal of participants' schools/college.

Chief Education Officer and staff
Chief Adviser
Chair, Rochdale Education Committee

Bielefeld's Chief Education Officer
Senior School Inspector
Twin Town Co-ordinator

Rochdale's Twin Town Co-ordinator

Rochdale Teachers' Centre

Scholarship Information

There are two opportunities for students to undertake a term's focussed study in Bielefeld.

- i) For students intending to study German at University level.
- ii) For a student specialising in craft/design.

Follow up Resources developed by the group

Video, slides and photographs of the visit

Maps

Realia

Scrapbooks

F ORGANISATIONAL COMMENTS

- 1 The fact that all participants stayed in the same place in Bielefeld assisted the planning, reviewing, plenary sessions and general organisation of the visit.
- 2 Effort put into preparation, planning and in giving a detailed focus of interest assisted in having a programme relevant to the interests expressed and which got beyond the general tour to specific details.
- 3 The presence of Bielefeld Officers during the visit was a considerable advantage in the smooth running of the visit and the provision of vital background information.
- 4 The use of a bus during the study visit was a great advantage for organisational purposes and saved valuable time.

REFERENCES

- 1 MSC/NEDC
'Competence and Competition'
- 2 S Prais and K Wagner
"Schooling Standards in England and Germany"
- 3 NFER/EPIC
Information Sheets on education system in West Germany.
- 4 CEDEFOP
"Youth Unemployment and Vocational Training".
- 5 CEDEFOP
"Franco German Study: Relationships between education and training and their impact on Education and Labour Market Policies".
- 6 Coombe Lodge reports: Basic full-time training in Business Studies and Languages Studies in basic vocational education and training Germany.
- 7 DES HMI Report
"Education in the Federal Republic of Germany aspects of curriculum and assessment".
- 8 TES Article April 1986 on 'Kollegschule'.
- 9 Youth Training News April 1986 'Retail training in West Germany'.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT LIST

Ken Buckley	Balderstone Community School
Eileen Brett	Balderstone Community School
Paul Simpson	Queen Elizabeth's Senior High School
David Shaw	High Birch Special School
Alistair Linden	Sutherland High School
Pat Sankey	Siddal Moor High School
Mary Taylor	Greenhill Upper School
Dave Watson	Oulder Hill Community School
Stuart Tonks	Moorclose Senior High School
Mick Floyd	Bishop Henshaw Upper School
Barbara Ward	Rochdale Technical College
Bernard Thompson	Rochdale Technical College
Dinah Kenworthy	State Mill Centre for Education and Training
Rosemary Marsden	LEA : FE Branch
Diana Cavanagh	LEA : Schools Branch

All teachers have responsibilities in 14-19 curriculum involving

- TVE1
- CPVE
- YTS
- GCSE
- Pre-Vocational Programme 14-16

VISIT OF ROCHDALE TEACHERS TO BIELEFELD 8 - 14 MARCH 1987
- PROGRAMME

Sunday 8 March

6.55 pm

Arrival Dusseldorf BA 952
 Afterwards : a bus will bring you
 to Bielefeld,
 Familienferienheim Teutoburg

Monday 9 March

8.45 am

Departure by bus

9.30

Kollegschule Bethel (Herr Klemens)

11.15

Transfer by bus

11.30

Berufsbildungswerk Bethel (Dr Schwager)

12.30

Lunch at Berufsbildungswerk

1.15 pm

Transfer by bus

2.00 - 5.00

Hospital school II Patmoschule
 (Herr Schroder)
 Transfer by bus

6.00

Supper at "Kukenshowe"

about 8.00

Return by bus

Tuesday 10 March

9.45 am

Departure by bus

10.30

Sightseeing tour (Frau Karpinski)

1.00 pm

Lord Mayor's reception and Lunch with the
 Lord Mayor (Klaus Schwickert) at Ratskeller
 Afterwards : walk to the Arbeitsamt

3.00

Talk with the vocational counselling team
 Arbeitsamt Bielefeld (Herr Malsbender,
 Herr Hageman)

about 5.00

Shopping in Bielefeld's city centre
 Return by bus

Wednesday 11 March

8.45 am Departure by bus

9.30 Hauptschule Sierkerschule (Herr Gaus)

12.00 Transfer by bus

12.30 Lunch at Cafeteria Ravensberger Spinnerei

2.30 pm Visit to the "Alte Ravensberger Spinnerei"
(the Volkshochschule is placed in it)
(Herr Ukena)

3.30 Information about "Pädagogischer Beirat" (Herr
Wenzel, Herr Berbermeir) Volkshochschule, Room
240

5.00 Walk through the city to the restaurant "Alt-
Bielefeld"

6.00 Supper at "Alt-Bielefeld"

7.30 Walk through the old quarter to the
"Hannenfass"

Thursday 12 March

8.45 am Departure by bus

9.30 Carl-Severing-Schulen
Kaufmannische Berufs-, Berufsgrund-
Fachoberschule und Handelsschulen mit
gymnasialem Aufbau (Dr Klippstein)
Coffee-time in between

11.00 Carl-Severing-Schulen
Städtische berufliche Schulen für Gestaltung,
Ernährung und Technik mit Berufsschulen,
Fachschule und Fachoberschule (Herr Knake)

about 12.30 Lunch there

2.30 pm Transfer by bus

3.00 - 4.00 Verein für Berufsfindung und Ausbildung für
Jugendliche (Frau Tiltmann, Frau Herrman)

4.15 alternative;

a) Return by bus
Supper at Familienferienheim Teutoburg

or

b) Transfer by bus to Bielefeld's city
centre 6.30

Friday 13 March

8.45	Departure by bus
9.30	Sparkasse Bielefeld (Herr Generotzky, Herr Stock)
12.30	Lunch at Sparkasse
2.00 pm	transfer by bus to the Town Hall and to Familienferienheim Teutoburg (Possibility of shopping or returning to Familienferienheim Teutoburg)
6.30	Supper at Familienferienheim Teutoburg

Saturday 14 March

Early in the morning	Departure by bus
11.30 am	Take-off Dusseldorf BA 925

EXAMPLES OF DATA COLLECTED ON VISITIn English

- Sparkasse Bank training programme and information booklet.
- Framework of vocational training in West Germany.
- Kollegschule curriculum framework.
- Overview of education system in West Germany.
- Hauptschule prospectus.
- Tourist information 'Jon and Julia visit Bielefeld'.
- Vocational Counselling in West Germany (Federal Institute of Labour).
- 'Dual System of Vocational Training in Germany and its contribution to solving the problem of Youth Unemployment'. K Othmann.
- 'Programs of Vocational Preparation and Training for young people who have difficulties in getting a place'. B Jensitike.
- Vocational guidance, Information and Training Placement through the Labour Offices. R Wohllelsen.
- class 9 English Test

In German

- Leaflets about various establishments visited.
- Model/Mini Company documents.
- Work experience documents.
- Specialist materials relating to individual topic areas.
- Realia for various German language teaching courses.